

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 1023

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4
TAGS: PINT, CSCE, UR
SUBJECT: UNOFFICIAL CSCE GROUP ROUNDUP

REF: MOSCOW 851,

1. SUMMARY. CSCE GROUP LEADER ORLOV SEES "PAUSE," WHICH HE EXPECTS WILL CONTINUE UNTIL AFTER BELGRADE, IN AUTHORITIES' ATTEMPTS TO CRACK DOWN ON GROUP. ONE SIGN OF TRUCE IS APPARENT WILLINGNESS TO RECONNECT HIS TELEPHONE. THE LITHUANIAN CHAPTER OF CSCE GROUP CONTINUES ITS WORK WITHOUT ANY HARASSMENT AT ALL. ADDITIONAL CHAPTERS OF THE GROUP MAY FORM IN LATVIA AND GEORGIA AND - LESS LIKELY - IN BELORUSSIA. THE CSCE GROUP INTENDS TO CONTINUE ITS ACTIVITIES. END SUMMARY.

2. YURIY ORLOV, LEADER OF THE UNOFFICIAL CSCE OBSERVATION GROUP, TOLD US JANUARY 20 THAT HARASSMENT OF HIM HAD NOW TOTALLY CEASED. AS FAR AS HE WAS CONCERNED, THE AUTHORITIES HAD DECIDED TO LET THE MATTER (ARISING OUT OF THE SEARCH JANUARY 4 OF HIS APARTMENT) LAPSE. FOR THE TIME BEING, HE THOUGHT THAT THERE WOULD BE NO ADDITIONAL LEGAL CONSEQUENCES. ORLOV SUGGESTED THAT
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THE "PAUSE" WOULD PROBABLY BE OF LONG DURATION, AT LEAST UNTIL AFTER THE BELGRADE REVIEW CONFERENCE. IN ANY CASE HE EXPECTS THE AUTHORITIES TO BECOME INCREASINGLY CAUTIOUS IN DEALINGS WITH THE GROUP AS THE BELGRADE CONFERENCE NEARS.

3. ORLOV DID NOT RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT SOME

EVENT LIKE THE METRO EXPLOSION MIGHT TEMPT THE AUTHORITIES TO CRACK DOWN AGAIN, AND HE ADMITTED THAT THE AUTHORITIES HAD ENOUGH MATERIAL ON HAND TO FABRICATE A CASE, BUT HE FELT IT UNLIKELY THAT THEY WOULD DO SO. HE ALSO IMPLIED THAT THE GROUP MIGHT BE MORE CAREFUL REGARDING THE CONTENT OF ITS ACTIVITIES, AND BE ESPECIALLY SURE OF THE ACCURACY OF THE FACTS IN ANY DECLARATION, IN THE PERIOD BEFORE BELGRADE. THERE WAS NO FEELING, HOWEVER, THAT THE GROUP WOULD REDUCE SUBSTANTIALLY ITS ACTIVITIES BETWEEN NOW AND BELGRADE.

4. ONE SIGN OF THE NEW TRUCE BETWEEN HIM AND THE AUTHORITIES, NOTED ORLOV, WAS THAT HE HAD JUST RECEIVED A POST CARD FROM THE MOSCOW TELEPHONE OFFICE INFORMING HIM THAT HIS PHONE WOULD BE RECONNECTED. IT WAS LAST CUT OFF ABOUT ONE YEAR AGO. ORLOV SAID THAT HE HAD NO ILLUSIONS THAT IT WOULD REMAIN CONNECTED FOR LONG, BUT THOUGHT IT A GOOD SIGN THAT THE AUTHORITIES WERE PREPARED TO TAKE THIS STEP.

5. ANOTHER POSITIVE STEP, OBSERVED ORLOV, WOULD COME IF THE AUTHORITIES ALLOWED ALEKSANDR GINZBURG, ANOTHER GROUP MEMBER WHOSE APARTMENT WAS SEARCHED, TO LEGALIZE HIS RESIDENCE IN MOSCOW. GINZBURG SERVED A PRISON TERM, AT THE CONCLUSION OF WHICH HE WAS FREED BUT DENIED THE RIGHT TO LIVE IN MOSCOW. THE PERIOD OF DEPRIVATION ENDS ON JANUARY 23. SHOULD THE AUTHORITIES ALLOW GINZBURG TO REGULARIZE HIS STATUS, IT WOULD BE A CLEAR SIGN OF TRUCE.

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6. TOMAS VENCLOVA, A MEMBER OF THE LITHUANIAN CHAPTER OF THE CSCE GROUP, TOLD US THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO HARASSMENT AT ALL OF THE CHAPTER IN RECENT WEEKS. HE WAS UNCLEAR AS TO THE REASON FOR THE LACK OF ACTIVITY BY THE LOCAL POLICE AUTHORITIES, BUT ATTRIBUTED IT AT LEAST IN PART TO THE RAPID WESTERN MEDIA REACTION TO THE SEARCHES IN MOSCOW. THIS SERVED TO DETER THE LOCAL POLICE. HE ALSO NOTED THAT THE LITHUANIAN COMMUNITIES ABROAD HAVE VERY SPEEDY AND ACCURATE INFORMATION ABOUT EVENTS IN LITHUANIA AND WOULD HAVE PUBLICIZED NEWS OF REPRESSION.

7. AS WE HAVE REPORTED PREVIOUSLY (MOSCOW 132), VENCLOVA IS LEAVING THE USSR TO ACCEPT A TEMPORARY APPOINTMENT AT BERKELEY. HE ATTRIBUTES HIS HAVING RECEIVED PERMISSION TO HIS MEMBERSHIP IN THE CSCE GROUP. ALTHOUGH HE WAS GIVEN A PASSPORT VALID FOR FIVE YEARS (AND TOLD HE WILL BE ALLOWED TO STAY ABROAD FOR AT LEAST TWO YEARS WITHOUT TROUBLE), HE ASSUMES THAT HIS SOVIET

CITIZENSHIP WILL BE TAKEN FROM HIM ONCE HE GETS OUT. THIS IMPRESSION IS REINFORCED BY A COMMENT FROM AN OFFICIAL AT THE VILNIUS OVIR WHO TOLD HIM THAT AN APPLICATION FROM HIS WIFE AND DAUGHTER TO VISIT HIM IN THE U.S. WOULD BE FAVORABLY RECEIVED.

8. PLANS ARE UNDER WAY TO FORM TWO, AND POSSIBLE THREE ADDITIONAL CHAPTERS OF THE CSCE GROUP. A GROUP OF PEOPLE LIVING IN LATVIA ARE TRYING TO FORM A CHAPTER. THEIR MAIN PROBLEM IS THAT THERE IS NOT ONE LATVIAN AMONG THEM AND THEY THINK THAT IT WOULD BE TACTICALLY UNDESIRABLE TO ORGANIZE A LATVIAN CHAPTER, THE MEMBERS OF WHICH WERE RUSSIAN, JEWISH AND POLISH. THE ORGANIZERS ARE HOPING TO FIND AT LEAST ONE LATVIAN TO BE THE CHAIRMAN. IF THEY SUCCEED, THEY WILL ANNOUNCE ITS FORMATION.

9. ORLOV ALSO COMMENTED ON A GEORGIAN GROUP WHICH IS CONFIDENTIAL

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NOW IN THE PROCESS OF FORMATION. HE SAID THAT HIS PREFERENCE WOULD HAVE BEEN FOR A COMBINED GEORGIAN-ARMENIAN GROUP, BUT IMPLIED THAT IT WAS PROVING IMPOSSIBLE TO GET TWO SUCH MUTUALLY ANTIPATHETIC PEOPLES TO REACH AGREEMENT EVEN ON A MATTER THAT MIGHT EVENTUALLY AID BOTH. THERE ARE SIX GEORGIANS IN THE CHAPTER, THE HEAD OF WHICH WILL BE ZVIAD GAMSAKHURDIA, SON OF A FAMOUR GEORGIAN AUTHOR AND HIMSELF A DISSIDENT POET. ORLOV NOTED THAT GAMSAKHURDIA WAS, EVEN BY GEORGIAN STANDARDS, UNUSUALLY EBULLIENT, AND WE RECEIVED THE IMPRESSION THAT ORLOV WAS NOT TOTALLY PLEASED AT THE PROSPECT OF THE FORMATION OF A GEORGIAN CHAPTER, UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF A MAN WHOSE JUDGMENT HAS NOT ALWAYS BEEN GOOD. FINALLY, THERE IS ALSO AN ATTEMPT TO FORM A GROUP IN BELORUSSIA. THE PROBLEMS THERE STEM MOSTLY FROM A VERY ACTIVE POLICE MONITORING OF DISSIDENT ACTIVITIES AS WELL AS THE DIFFICULTY OF FINDING ANY BELORUSSIANS (AS OPPOSED TO OTHER NATIONALIITIES) WHO MIGHT BE WILLING TO JOIN.

10. COMMENT. IT IS CLEAR THAT THE CSCE GROUP IS INCREASINGLY RELYING ON WESTERN MEDIA FOR PROTECTION FROM OFFICIAL PRESSURE BEFORE BELGRADE. IN THIS REGARD, A SOVIET SOURCE CLOSE TO THE GROUP (ALTHOUGH NOT A MEMBER) SAID THE GROUP WAS BECOMING ADEPT IN HANDLING THE WESTERN CORRESPONDENT RESIDENTS IN MOSCOW. WHILE THE THREAT OF EMBARRASSING PUBLICITY MAY DETER FURTHER HARASSMENT, WE WOULD NOT RULE OUT THE AUTHORITIES' ATTEMPTING TO USE A FORTUITOUS EVENT, SUCH AS THE RECENT METRO EXPLOSION, TO DISCREDIT THE GROUP AND THEN TO CRACK DOWN. WE NOTE IN THE CONNECTION THAT VLADIMIR AL'BRECKHT,

A PROMINENT DISSIDENT, WAS RECENTLY INTERROGATED ABOUT
HIS WHEREABOUTS AT THE TIME OF THE METRO INCIDENT.

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